

# GENERAL ORDER

FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT



SUBJECT: SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS

NUMBER: 530.3

CANCELS ORDER DATED: N/A

DATE: 7-1-15

## I. PURPOSE

This document establishes the purpose, authority, and responsibilities of the position of School Crossing Guard (SCG).

## II. POLICY

In collaboration with the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Fairfax County Police Department will provide public safety services that promote the safe and efficient delivery of school aged children to and from public schools in Fairfax County. The aforementioned services will be provided by SCGs at school crossings that serve children who walk or bike to and from school.

## III. TERMINOLOGY

CJA: Criminal Justice Academy

DCJS: Department of Criminal Justice Services

FCPS: Fairfax County Public Schools

MUTCD: Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

NHTSA: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

PM: Pivot Maneuver

POV: Personally Owned Vehicle

SCG: School Crossing Guard

SCG-II: School Crossing Guard – Level II

TDC: Traffic Direction and Control

VDOT: Virginia Department of Transportation

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IV. AUTHORITY

The Code of Virginia establishes the lawful authority for uniformed SCGs to direct and control traffic in close proximity to designated school crossings.

Code of Virginia § 46.2-834, signals by law enforcement officers and school crossing guards, states, in part:

- A. Law enforcement officers may assume control of traffic at any intersection, regardless of whether such intersection is controlled by lights, controlled by other traffic control devices, or uncontrolled. Whenever any law-enforcement officer so assumes control of traffic, all drivers of vehicles shall obey his signals.
- B. Law enforcement officers and uniformed school crossing guards may assume control of traffic otherwise controlled by lights, and in such event, signals by officers and uniformed school crossing guards shall take precedence over such traffic control devices.
- C. Uniformed school crossing guards may control traffic at any marked school crossing, whether such crossing is at an intersection or another location. Uniformed school crossing guards who are supplied by their local school division with hand-held stop signs shall use such signs whenever controlling traffic as authorized in this subsection.

Code of Virginia § 46.2-1309, Officers may direct traffic; signals, states:

Law enforcement officers and uniformed school crossing guards may direct traffic by signals. Such signals other than by voice shall be as follows:

- 1. To stop traffic by hand. Stand with shoulders parallel to the moving traffic. Raise arms forty-five degrees above shoulder with hand extended, palm towards moving traffic to be stopped.
- 2. To move traffic by hand. Stand with shoulders parallel to traffic to be moved. Extended right arm and hand full length at height of shoulders towards such traffic, fingers extended and joined, palms down. Bring hand sharply in direction traffic is to move. Repeat movement with left arm and to start traffic from opposite direction.

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3. To stop and start traffic by whistle. One blast, moving traffic to stop; two blasts, traffic in opposite direction to move.
4. Emergency stop of traffic by whistle. Three or more short blasts, all traffic shall immediately clear the intersection and stop.

Such law enforcement officers and uniformed school crossing guards may also use supplemental traffic direction devices, including but not limited to hand-held stop or go signs, in directing traffic as provided in this section.

The United States Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Administration publishes the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). MUTCD defines the standards used by road managers nationwide to install and maintain traffic control devices on all public streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public travel. It also serves as a national resource that provides guidelines for SCGs.

MUTCD – Section 7E.05, Operating Procedures for Adult School Crossing Guards, states, in part:

Adult crossing guards should not direct traffic in the usual law enforcement regulatory sense. In the control of traffic, they should pick opportune times to create a reasonably safe gap. At these times, they should stand in the roadway to indicate that pedestrians are about to use, or are using, the crosswalk, and that all vehicular traffic must stop.

Adult crossing guards should use a STOP paddle. The STOP paddle should be the primary hand-signaling device.

Additionally, the Safe Routes to School publication, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), outlines a 12-step process for the safe crossing of children at crosswalks. The publication does not recommend the direction of traffic by SCGs beyond stopping traffic to facilitate the crossing of children.

However, the application of the MUTCD and NHTSA guidelines are not practical in all circumstances based on the configuration of the roadway and associated crosswalk. In some cases, the SCGs will utilize full traffic direction and control (TDC) procedures to safely move children through crossings, while

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simultaneously managing vehicular traffic in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

## V. PROCEDURES

### A. General Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the SCG is the safe passage of school aged children at designated school crossings. The duties of SCG also include the following:

1. Controls traffic at crossings to allow children to cross the roadway safely.
2. Directs and controls traffic as needed at crossings to aid vehicular congestion, to include kiss-and-ride:
  - i. Pivot Maneuver (PM)
  - ii. TDC
3. Deploys school sentinel signs (where required) in the roadway at designated points near crossings and removes them before going off duty.
4. Maintains discipline over children to ensure conformance with traffic and crossing regulations.
5. Reports children who fail to follow instructions and/or are not cooperative.
6. Instructs children in the safe and correct way to cross streets, and in ways to identify a potential traffic hazard.
7. Reports accidents, traffic violations, and hazardous conditions to a first line supervisor.

### B. The following NHTSA protocols will be employed by SCGs at crossing locations that are served through the PM:

1. Wait for a gap in traffic on the guard's side of the street.
2. Face the closest oncoming traffic and make eye contact with the

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approaching drivers.

3. Walk to the center of street with the STOP paddle held high. If not using a STOP paddle, walk to the center of the street with an arm raised towards traffic and parallel to the ground with the palm and fingers extended upward.
4. Where there are more than two lanes, enter the street and alert the traffic one lane at a time.
5. Face opposite approaching traffic and make eye contact with those drivers.
6. Stand on the crosswalk line close to the center of the street and make sure that all traffic has stopped, including any turning vehicles.
7. Face the intersection.
8. Verbally instruct the children to cross and tell them to look left-right-left while crossing and proceed across the street within the marked crosswalk.
9. Do not allow any cars to cross the crosswalk until all the students have crossed.
10. Remain in the center of the street until the last child reaches the opposite side of the street.
11. Utilize PM to release one lane/direction of traffic that is the most congested. When utilizing the PM, the SCG shall not employ additional TDC in the management of vehicular traffic.
12. Walk to the curb or edge of the street with the STOP paddle and/or stop-arm held high the entire way. When back at the curb or edge of the street, lower hand(s) and allow traffic to flow again.
13. Remain near the curb or edge of the street for the next group of children to assemble.

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## C. Pivot Maneuver

The PM is simply a limited form of traffic direction and control.

1. The PM is accomplished as the SCG prepares to exit the roadway after crossing a group of children.
2. The SCG provides instruction to one lane/direction of traffic in order to provide relief in terms of congestion.
3. The PM does not involve continuous TDC by the SCG. The pivot is designed to provide limited traffic control, while not diverting the attention of the SCG from their primary responsibility – the walking children.
4. At the conclusion of the PM, the SCG exits the roadway and remains at the curb or edge of the street to gather and control the next group of walking students.
5. The application of the PM is in accordance with the authority granted under the Code of Virginia.

## D. Traffic Direction and Control

In accordance with the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), the Criminal Justice Academy (CJA) trains recruit officers and School Crossing Guard-II (SCG-II) in TDC.

1. TDC is used in any situation in which traffic conditions require traffic management by any SCG or police officer beyond crossing children or utilizing the PM.
2. In this case, SCG-II and officers may stay in the roadway or intersection and continuously manage vehicular traffic as part of crossing duties.
3. The use of TDC is authorized by any police officer or SCG-II.

As described, TDC by officers and SCG-II are in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

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### VI. TRAINING

SCG and SCG-II will be trained at the time of hire based on respective job descriptions and DCJS mandates.

- A. The CJA will train SCG in the School Crossing Guard Program and the associated PM.
- B. The CJA will train SCG-II in the School Crossing Guard Program and the associated PM and TDC.
- C. Traffic Division personnel will provide an annual refresher seminar for SCG and SCG-II specific to duties and responsibilities, to include PM and TDC.
- D. The Patrol Bureau, or applicable Station Command, will be responsible for administering a two-day site orientation for newly hired SCGs once they have been trained by the CJA.

### VII. SUPERVISION

SCGs are assigned to district stations based on the location of designated school crossings. As such, SCG are under the purview of their respective station commanders and report to first line (day work) supervisors for matters related to routine operations.

Regulation 201.11, Reporting to Duty, mandates that all employees report for duty at the time and place required by assignment, and shall be properly uniformed, equipped, and prepared to assume duty.

SCGs shall coordinate leave requests with respective station commanders, through first line supervisors, to ensure proper coverage of crossing assignments in a timely manner. For unexpected circumstances that require leave, the SCG shall notify the on duty day work supervisor without delay to ensure coverage of assignments. Failure to follow these guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

In accordance with General Order 320.1, Inspections, the Traffic Division, through station first line supervisors, shall coordinate an inspection (twice annually) of SCGs to ensure compliance with this policy. The inspection of SCG

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shall confirm the utilization of issued equipment in the proper application of the PM and TDC during school crossings.

### VIII. UNIFORM and EQUIPMENT

The required basic uniform for a SCG is outlined in the Manual of Standard Operating Procedures – SOP 04-002, Police Uniforms, Personal Equipment, and Civilian Clothing.

Additionally, MUTCD – Section 7D.05, STOP-Paddle (R1-1), states, in part:

The STOP (R1-1) paddle shall be an octagonal shape. The background of the STOP face shall be red with at least 6-inch series upper-case white letters and border. The paddle shall be at least 18 inches in size and have the word message STOP on both sides. The paddle shall be retro reflectorized or illuminated when used during hours of darkness.

### IX. USE of PERSONAL VEHICLE

SCGs shall utilize personally owned vehicles (POV) as transportation to and from crossing locations. SCGs shall receive mileage reimbursements in accordance with County payroll policy.

### X. SCHOOL CROSSING LOCATIONS

The minimum criteria for use in establishing and maintaining a crossing location for Fairfax County elementary and secondary public school students shall be as follows:

- A. A minimum of thirteen (13) or more students, either elementary and or secondary, cross the roadway at an intersection during any one (1) hour period.
- B. Where vehicular traffic and school children crossing the roadway has a rate of flow of twenty-five (25) vehicles per five (5) minute period (300 per hour) for elementary age students and thirty (30) vehicles per five (5) minute period (360 per hour) for secondary age students. If any crossing involves a mixture of elementary and secondary students the formula used



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will be that set for elementary age students.

- C. Where no alternate route or method of transportation is available.
- D. Where there is no “controlled” intersection within 500 feet of the location where the SCG assignment is desired. A “controlled” intersection shall mean an intersection controlled by any of the following:
  - 1. Traffic signals,
  - 2. Stop sign(s) protecting crosswalks,
  - 3. Crossing already established with a guard/officer present; or
  - 4. VDOT or any branch of Fairfax County Public Safety Services (Police or Fire) that determines that the crossing factors are so unusual that the safety of students demands the establishment of an adult guard. These factors cannot be established based on unsafe actions by pedestrians where a safe alternative(s) may be located nearby. Such factors shall be submitted in memorandum form to the FCPD Traffic Division for follow-up action.
- E. Where sight distance to the crossing point, for any motorist, is less than the distance the vehicle travels in the time it takes for a student to walk halfway across the street. This distance will be measured using the posted speed. The federal/state standard of ten (10) times the posted speed will be used in determining this factor (i.e.; 25 mph = 250 feet, 35 mph = 350 feet, etc.). Due to the safety concerns of the FCPD and its employees, no crossing will be granted if the crossing point is less than 250 feet visible to any driver, traveling in any direction, which crosses or may cross the path of the student pedestrians.
- F. Where fifty (50) percent of motorists travel at a speed of greater than ten (10) mph over the posted speed limit.
- G. Where safe gaps between vehicles are less than four (4) gaps of thirty (30) seconds duration or three (3) gaps of forty (40) seconds duration within a five (5) minute period for elementary students. Gaps for secondary students may be somewhat reduced.

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- H. Where other extenuating circumstances, such as projected traffic increases, school district changes, commercial development, joint police and school concerns, etc.
- I. Assignment of a SCG may be changed should increase or decrease in value or when a previously approved school crossing has been converted into a bus stop by FCPS School Transportation Office.
- J. All crossings involving high school age students will continue to be conducted upon request; however the maturity level of those students will play a greater role in the determination of any such approval. Any crossing involving a mixture of high school and either elementary or secondary age students will be conducted as if a request for elementary or secondary students has been submitted.

On an annual basis, the Traffic Division, in collaboration with FCPS, shall conduct a review of all school crossing sites in Fairfax County to ensure adherence to the aforesaid standards.

## XI. LEGAL REFERENCE

Code of Virginia § 46.2-834

Code of Virginia § 46.2-1309

## XII. ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCE

### CALEA

ADM 61.3.4

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This General Order becomes effective July 1, 2015 and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.

ISSUED BY:

APPROVED BY:

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Chief of Police

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County Executive

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